

REMARKS

A first Office Action was mailed on September 8, 2004. Claims 1 – 7 are pending in the present application. With this Response, Applicant amends claims 1 and 2. No new matter is introduced.

ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 6 and 7 are currently allowed.

Applicant also thanks the Examiner for indicating that dependent claims 2 - 4 are objected to as depending on rejected base claim 1, but that each would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of base claim 1 and any intervening claims. Applicant amends claim 2 to include the limitations of base claim 1, and respectfully submits that claim 2 is in condition for allowance. As claims 3 and 4 depend from allowable claim 2, Applicant submits that claims 3 and 4 are also allowable for at least this reason.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the present objection to claims 2 - 4 be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,122,250 to Taniguchi. Applicant amends claim 1 to further clarify the nature of his invention, and respectfully traverses this rejection.

In amended independent claim 1, Applicant recites:

1. A channel reassignment method comprising the steps of:

- (a) at a starting point of a reassignment section, making a bridge setting for transmitting a signal on a source channel also onto a destination channel;
- (b) interlinking a pointer operation of a first pointer circuit in said destination channel with a pointer operation of a second pointer circuit in said source channel;
- (c) switching the signal from the source channel to the destination channel after performing steps (a) and (b);
- (d) clearing the pointer interlinking operation effected in step (b) after performing step (c); and
- (e) clearing the bridge setting made in step (a) after performing step (c).

Taniguchi discloses a ring transmission system for a bi-directional line-switched ring including a modified squelch table having modified node IDs given to the nodes in a rising order of connection (see, e.g., abstract of Taniguchi). The Examiner maintains that Taniguchi discloses or suggests all of the elements of claim 1 at column 12, lines 30 – 60, including Applicant's claimed step for interlinking pointer operations. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Taniguchi fails to disclose or suggest Applicant's claimed interlinking step in which a pointer operation of a first pointer circuit in a destination channel is interlinked with a pointer operation of a second pointer circuit in a source channel (see, e.g., page 9, line 35 – page 11, line 30 of Applicant's specification. As a result, Applicant submits that Taniguchi fails to make Applicant's amended independent claim 1 obvious.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 1 stands in condition for allowance. As dependent claim 5 depends from allowable

independent claim 1, Applicant submits that dependent claim 5 is also allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1 – 7, which include independent claims 1, 2 and 6, and the claims that depend therefrom, stand in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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